Law Enforcement
Community Services
Seniors

Triad Newsletter

A Waldo County Joint Venture in Senior Safety

Volume 24, Issue 1 Winter 2026

Look How They Are Scamming Us Now!

Another Scam Involving the IRS

There have been reports of people receiving text messages claiming they are eligible to receive a $1,400 Economic Impact Payment. The message says to get it, you need to fill out a form and once it is received, the amount will be deposited into your bank account within one to two business days.

There is a link in the message that takes you to a website that looks just like the official IRS website. Clicking on it brings you to a form where you are directed to provide your name, address, Social Security number, bank account number and other personal information. This is a scam!

In reviewing records, the IRS discovered that about a million taxpayers did not claim the $1,400 Recovery Rebate Credit on their 2021 tax returns so they would get their stimulus check. These individuals have been identified and will automatically receive a direct deposit in late January. Those people will receive a letter explaining why the deposit was made.

You can avoid this scam by:

- Remembering government agencies do not use text messages or emails to send notices. All communication begins with a letter sent through the postal service.
- Never click on a link in an unsolicited message. In this case, go directly to the IRS website for information.

Loan Scam

People are reporting calls from someone saying you are pre-approved for a loan. If the message goes to voicemail, you may get repeated messages reminding you that thousands of dollars are waiting for you. If you answer, you are asked for all the information you would be required to give if you went to a bank for a loan: your full name, mailing address, physical address, phone number, and Social Security number. A voicemail may ask you to call back if you want to get taken off the call list.

Never call back. Don't even call back to opt out. If you respond, the scammer knows it is a working number that someone is paying attention to and this will lead to more calls.

One thing you can do is block the phone number. Sometimes these calls come at different times of day using different caller ID numbers. That is to make you think someone different is calling or just to wear you down. You can block each number. This can be annoying but can help.

Don't fall for a loan from one of these callers. You will not receive any money and you have provided all the information they need to use your data for other scams. Many sell the information collected to other scammers. If you fall for one scam, you are likely to be contacted by other scammers.

Read about more scams inside ⟶

More Scams from Our Readers

Missed Jury Duty Scam

The Waldo County sheriff's office has received a number of reports from people saying they got a call from the Waldo County Sheriff's office and the caller gave the name of an actual deputy working there. In each instance the person was told they had missed jury duty and they could choose to be arrested or pay a fine. The fine was to be paid in ITunes cards - used to buy music or movies to download on a smart phone or computer. Some people bought the cards and provided the numbers on cards to the scammer because they thought they would have to go to jail if they did not pay.

If you miss jury duty, the court will issue a summons that will be delivered by the police. The document will tell you to come before the judge and explain your absence. Missing jury duty is not an offense for which you will be arrested. Government agencies do not accept payment for fines in gift cards.

Health Insurance Scam

A reader got a phone call where her caller ID showed the name of her health insurance company. She answered and was told they were offering some health care items including a scale that measured weight and body fat plus an Apple watch to track exercise level, sleep patterns and more. She gave the information requested and received scales. Since she did not receive the watch, she called her insurance company using the number on her card and was told they were not providing scales and fitness watches or other health improvement items.

If you get a call out of the blue, even if it is from a company you use, call the company back using a number you know is correct. By using a company name you are familiar with, it is easy for a scammer to get you to provide personal information. Scamming is a big and profitable business. Keep you guard up.

Motor Vehicle Scam

A reader moved from Massachusetts to Waldo County about 10 years ago. Lately, she has been receiving two different text notices each claiming to be from the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles. One says she owes money for outstanding traffic tickets and the other says she has an outstanding balance on her EZ pass. She knows she does not owe either of these charges. She does continue to have a phone number with a Massachusetts area code. She followed up by checking on the website of the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles, where she learned this is a scam.

This scam is happening nationwide. The state motor vehicle department claiming to be sending the notice will be the same as the area code on your phone. The amount of money being requested for the fee and fines is generally a few hundred dollars so many people just pay it. If enough people pay, scammers make millions.

If a government agency was looking for payment from you, they would contact you with a letter sent through the US Postal Service. Government agencies will not use text messages, emails or phone calls to communicate with you.

Scam Involving Gmail

A reader received a message that appeared to come from Gmail. It read "I am the representative of customer support center at Gmail. We have received 42 complaints about your Email account recently. There are thousands of spam emails sent from your email address in the last 3 days. We require your clarification now to avoid mail account deletion within 48 hours. We recommend you to install an antivirus. We will choose the best one for you." Attached is a link to fix the problem. Clicking the link probably downloads some type of virus or malware onto your computer.

Note the wording of the message. Some sentences are missing words or the tense is not right. These subtle abnormalities are clues that this is not a legitimate message.

More Scams

.Low-Price Scams

Once the holidays are over, many companies offer sales on the remaining merchandise. Sometimes scammers have ads on social media where they impersonate real companies, and offer big discounts on brand-name products. Clicking on the ad will take you to a fake website that is a very realistic copy of the website of the actual company. The scammers are looking for your name, address, credit card information or bank account number. They can use this data to steal your money or your identity. You may get no merchandise or you might get a cheap fake of what you thought you were buying.

To protect yourself from this scam, don't click on an ad you find in social media. Instead, type the business name into your browser to see if the offer is there.

Reshipping Scam

On social media, people are finding a work-from-home job that promises easy money. The description says the job entails accepting shipments, repackaging them and sending them on to new addresses. The ad may say the employer is FedEx or Amazon.

When you get the packages, you are to throw out the original boxes, repackage them, and send the goods on to what is usually a foreign address. These are stolen goods and it is hard to track them once they are in another country.

Just like any job, you have to provide your name, address, Social Security number and the number of the bank account into which your earnings will be deposited. When the end of the month comes, no deposit has been made into your account.

You have been scammed. Reshipping goods is never a real job. Before you accept any job, look up the employer online typing the business name and the word "scam" into your browser. You may be able to find what the experiences of others have been with this company. Sometimes talking to someone you trust can help you think through an offer. Be careful!

Coupon Scams

Everyone likes a good deal and scammers are capitalizing on it. People are getting information about fake deals by text, emails, and on social media. Usually the fake coupons are worth much more than the real ones. In one variation of the scam, you find a coupon or promo code on social media offering steep discounts on a product at a major retailer - perhaps 80% off. You click on the link and make a purchase using the promo code. However, the merchandise never arrives. You try to contact the company but the website is no longer available or no one answers the phone.

Check the source of the coupon. If it does not come from a recognized coupon distributer, the manufacturer or the specific store, be wary. If you are not sure, go to the company's official website to look for the coupon.

Medical Alert Scams

For years there have been medical alert devices you wear and if you fall and cannot get up, you push a button and the device alerts someone you need help. There are scammers marketing fake devices. If you want a medical alert device, be sure you are getting a legitimate product.

Scammers call saying they are from Medicare or a medical provider and you are eligible for a free medical alert device. To receive it, you are asked for your Medicare number, your credit card number to pay for the monitoring, and perhaps your Social Security number to complete the deal.

If someone calls you out of the blue to try to sell you something or says you have won something, don't listen to the rest of the spiel. Just hang up. Legitimate businesses do not do this.

Pass It Along

People who know about scams are more likely to be able to spot them. Triad asks you to share what you know about scams with your family and friends. The Triad board of directors would be pleased to add them to the newsletter list if they have an interest.

Scam Targeting Veterans

A large number of Mainers received a post card that said service members and their spouses can now qualify for up to an extra $110 added to their check each month through the Veteran Savings Program. The card claimed funds are in addition to any current service-related benefits and will not affect existing service benefits. Spouses of service members may also qualify if they have CHAMPVA or TRICARE For Life. Along with the monthly amount, you could receive dental coverage at no cost to you regardless of your VA disability rating. Call within 5 days to help them manage their call volume.

There is no such program. If veterans called the number provided, they were asked for personal and financial information but did not receive the money promised.

A similar post card was sent out in other states. Generally there was a bit of variation in the offer from one state to another.

Before you sign up for an offer with a business or organization, contact them directly using a phone number you know is correct.

Debt Relief Scams

The holidays are the time when some people get themselves into credit card debt and then are looking for ways to negotiate the payments. Scammers know this and there are lots of them offering help. There are things to watch for in seeking a debt relief company and here are some of them:

- Company Contacts You First - Legitimate companies do not contact you asking if you are interested in debt relief. Scammers often do this and often use high pressure tactics to try to lure you in.
- Demands for upfront Fees -Asking for money before they provide a service is a definite sign of a scam. Federal law prohibits debt relief companies from charging fees before settling or reducing a consumer's debt. Walk away from anyone asking for money before they provide the service.
- Guarantees Results - Debt situations are complex and no legitimate company will promise results. Be wary if a company claims they will reduce your debt by a certain percentage or within a specific timeframe. These promises are too good to be true.
- Claims special Methods for Settling Debt - A company may tell you they have a special relationship with a creditor or use special techniques to settle debts for much less than you owed. There are standard methods used in the industry and there are no special tricks.
- Promises to Protect You - A scammer may say they can protect you from lawsuits, wage garnishment or collection calls. A real debt relief company may be able to help with these issues but they cannot completely shield you from legal action.
- Instructs You to Ignore Creditors - Ignoring creditors can lead to more lawsuits, late fees, interest or other financial consequences. A legitimate company will help you work with your creditors to try to find a manageable solution.
- Pledges to Help You Without Seeing Your Financial Documents - A legitimate debt relief company will require a detailed understanding of your financial situation before offering advice or solutions.

There are legitimate debt relief businesses. One way to find a reliable company is to check the Better Business Bureau website for debt relief companies with a high rating.

Thank you

to **Tarratine Tribe #13** for their support in helping Triad to keep Waldo County seniors

Something To Keep In Mind

If an offer sounds too good to be true, it probably is!

Things to Know

Lap Robes

Thank you to each of you!

Triad received 80 handmade lap robes to distribute to older residents of Waldo County. We were amazed and very pleased with the level of response. There was a great variety - knitted, crocheted and quilted in many different patterns and styles. Additionally, there were mittens, hats, scarves and a warm sweater contributed. They have found homes throughout the county.

The board of directors wants to thank every person who contributed their time and skills to help keep older people warmer this winter.

Protecting Communities from Fraud

With fraud being such a big problem in our state, an educational video was put together to help stop fraud before it happens. The Maine Credit Unions, the Bureau of Financial Institutions, the Maine Attorney General's Office, the Maine state Police and Legal Services for the Elderly developed a program that highlights some common warning signs of fraud and ways to protect yourself and others from falling victim.

You can view it by typing the following into your browser: Maine Credit Unions' Fraud Prevention Video. It contains a lot of good information.

Aspen Institute Fraud Task Force

There are many efforts to fight fraud around the country. Each is working on an specific area of fraud or covering a region of the country.

Recently, more than 80 large organizations including financial institutions, law enforcement, federal agencies, consumer advocacy groups and technology companies came together to initiate the development of a national fraud prevention strategy. By using a multi-faceted approach to help reduce the national fraud threat, they expect to establish a strong coordinated effort to protect all Americans.

Using Checks

Reports of check fraud have soured in the last couple of years. People are using fewer checks but criminals are still finding new ways to steal money using your check. They use common household chemicals to erase the amount and the name of the company or person to whom the check was written, leaving your signature. Next they fill in another name and amount and cash the check. You are not aware of this until you check your account online or receive your monthly bank statement.

There are some things you can do to help protect yourself.

- Write your check using a permanent gel pen. Criminals cannot cleanly washed that ink off the paper.
- Fill in any blank space before the amount where you write out the amount. Begin writing out the amount close to the edge of the paper so someone cannot add another figure in front of it. Start the numbers close to the dollar sign so someone cannot add another digit there.
- Don't add too much personal information on the front of the check. Your name is adequate. You do not need to provide your address and phone number.
- Review your accounts. Whether you monitor your account online or when you get your monthly statement, do it carefully and regularly. This can help you quickly find anything out of the ordinary.
- Look at each of the checks that have been cashed. Make sure the amount and the intended recipient are correct.
- If a check is missing when you review your statement, make a note an follow up on it.
- If you find any issues with your account, contact your bank immediately. They are there to help with any account problems.

Things to Know About Triad

Reflective House Number Signs

Triad sells reflective house number signs at cost. Signs are helpful to first responders as they look for a particular house, especially at night. It also helps delivery persons.

You can set the sign beside the road on a post or you can attach it to a rural mailbox. The cost for the sign is $15.

Send your order to:

Waldo County Triad
6 Public Safety Way
Belfast, ME 04915

Include your phone number so someone can contact you when the sign is ready. If it is helpful, someone can deliver it.

Contact Triad

If you want more information about Triad or its services, visit our website, call or email.

Website: ***waldocountytriad.com***

Phone*: 322-4149*

Email*: triad@waldocountyme.gov*

Friendly Caller Program

Many older Waldo County residents live alone without much contact with others. Triad offers the Friendly Caller program to give seniors a daily connection with the outside world and the opportunity to let someone know they are okay.

Participants call the County Communications Center every morning to have a chat with someone. If the person does not call in, the dispatchers will try calling the house. If there is no answer, they will contact the person designated by the individual to go to the house to check on them. Over the years, several enrolled people have fallen and been unable to get up. This program has been credited with saving lives. To register or to learn more about the program, call ***338-2040***.

RFID Sleeves

RFID card sleeves block the transmission waves that come from credit/debit cards that allow a card reader to take payments. Scammers have a device that can read the data stored on debit/ credit cards. Triad will have protective RFID card sleeves available at coming events. Be sure to pick one up.

Supporting Waldo County Triad

Triad is an all-volunteer organization. Funds are used entirely to support programs. Most services are free so that everyone can take part. If you would like to donate to Triad to help support a particular effort, below are the costs of three Triad services:

- Newsletter - $6 per year
- File of Life - $1.50 each
- Carbon monoxide/smoke detectors - $40 each

The cost of Triad's drug collection, daily call-in and 911 cellphone programs are all donated by member agencies.

To make a donation to help continue what Triad does, make a check payable to: **Waldo County Triad** and send it to:

Waldo County Triad
6 Public Safety Way
Belfast, ME 04915

File of Life

Triad offers a free medical information packet called a File of Life. It should be kept on your refrigerator door in the event of a medical emergency. It comes with a smaller version to keep in your wallet. Emergency responders are familiar with the File and look for it upon arrival. This packet can save the responders time as all the information they need to start helping you is in that packet. To receive a File of Life,

call: ***322-4149*** or

email: **triad@waldocountyme.gov**

If you have a File of Life with many edits, we can provide both large and small replacement inserts.

Community Opportunities

Triad Shredding and Drug Collection

Save the date of Saturday, April 25, 2026 and start gathering unwanted medications and all that paper that should be shredded. Watch for the time and location in the next newsletter.

Bring any unwanted hearing aids or eyeglasses, too. The Belfast Lions Club will have those refurbished and given to others who could use them.

Dining at the YMCA

Date: Last Wednesday of the month

Start Time: 11:30 a.m.

Location: YMCA
157 Lincolnville Ave., Belfast

Registration: Call ***338-4598***
(Please register so they have the right amount of food for those attending.)

Waldo County Pet Food Pantry

To help older people keep their pets, the Waldo County Pet Food Pantry accepts donations of pet food (partial bags are okay.) Also, they accept new or used leashes, bowls or other pet items. There is a drop box located near the door of the VFW hall on Field Street in Belfast.

To receive pet food, the pantry is open on the **first** Wednesday and the **third** Saturday of each month from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. (Come only once per month.) A rabies certificate is required for each cat or dog.

Veterans' Services

A representative of the Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services will be at Spectrum Generations monthly if people have made appointments to see him.

Date: Last Wednesday of the month

Time: by appointment only

Location: Spectrum Generations
18 Merriam Rd, Belfast

Appointment: Call ***338-1190***

Searsport Senior Drop-In Center

The Searsport Senior Drop-In Center is open to anyone. There are games, Bingo, a free light lunch and a presenter offering information of interest to seniors.

Date: Third Wednesdays

Time: 9 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Location: Former Lions Clubhouse
44 Prospect St.
Searsport

Belfast Community Works' Repair Cafe

Volunteers offer to repair items free of charge or at cost if you need new parts.

They have sewing machines and can repair clothes or other fabric items that need mending. They work on small appliances and bring commonly needed replacement parts. (If you have the replacement parts, bring them.) They also do basic bicycle repair and maintenance.

Date: Third Saturday of the month

Time: 9 - noon

Location: YMCA
157 Lincolnville Ave., Belfast

Winterport Senior Citizens Group

The Winterport Senior Citizens Group invites all seniors for socialization, fun, information and a potluck lunch.

Date: First and third Tuesdays
Time: 10:00 a.m.

Location: They have moved their meetings to a different building. The new location is:

Winterport Baptist Church
100 Coles Corner Road

Contact: ***713-1716*** for questions

For Information on events: go to Beautiful Winterport Maine on Facebook.

Waldo County Triad is a partnership of **seniors, law enforcement, and local organizations** dedicated to improving the safety of people 50 and older in their homes and communities through education and service.

Triad Phone Number: 322-4149

email: triad@waldocountyme.gov

Triad Officers

Chairman -------- Sue Dupler
Vice Chairman --Randy Fox
Secretary --------- Owen Smith
Treasurer ---------Matt Curtis

Newsletter Staff

Editor ---------- Pat Pierson
Proofreader --- Linda Didelot

Collating and Mailing Team:

Marian Burke	**Eileen Kelley**	**Charlene Pieske**
Brenda Campbell	**Audrey Lawson**	**Sarah Rossiter**
Sue Dean	**Mike Lawson**	**Owen Smith**
Linda Didelot	**Dana Ouellette**	**Evie Tinker**

Winter 2026

Triad Board of Directors

- **Marian Burke**
- **Matt Curtis**
- **Sue Dean**
- **Sue Dupler**
- **Randy Fox**
- **Eileen Kelley**
- **Patricia Kelley**
- **Lori Kuwik**
- **Sandra Otis Anderson**
- **Pat Pierson**
- **Owen Smith**
- **Evie Tinker**
- **Hillary Waterman**

Waldo County Triad programs are open to all residents who are age 50 or older.

To change your mailing address or to add or remove a name to this mailing list, call Waldo County Triad at *322-4149* or email at triad@waldocountyme.gov

Change Service Requested

Waldo County Triad
6 Public Safety Way
Belfast ME 04915

Triad

NONPROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE PAID
BELFAST ME 04915
PERMIT NO. 26